

January 12, 2016

A regular meeting of the Council of the Town of Bedford, Virginia, was held in the Council Hall of the Municipal Building at 7:00 p.m., January 12, 2016

Members present: Mayor Robert T. Wandrei; Councilman Tim Black; Councilman Robert D. Carson; Councilman Stacey L. Hailey; Councilman Beckham A. Stanley; and Councilman James A. Vest

Members absent: Vice Mayor Steve C. Rush

Staff present: Assistant Town Manager Bart Warner; Town Attorney W. W. Berry, IV; and Clerk of the Council Teresa W. Hatcher

Staff absent: Town Manager Charles P. Kolakowski

Mayor Wandrei opened the meeting and led all present in saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor Wandrei declared that the minutes of a regular Council meeting held on December 8, 2015, were approved as distributed.

Assistant Town Manager Warner reported on the following:

- The Town offices will be closed Friday, January 15 in observance of a Commonwealth of Virginia holiday and on Monday, January 18 in observance of a Federal holiday.
- Council members should contact the Town Manager's Office if interested in attending the Virginia Municipal League Day at the State Capitol on January 27.

Jeremy Johnson, Vice President of Bedford Main Street reported that Main Street had a very successful year. He spoke about the Christmas events in Town. Mr. Johnson said that Tina Gurley, owner of Clam Diggers Restaurant, and Leslie Bowyer, Arts Teacher at Liberty High School, were the persons responsible for decorating a lot of the vacant buildings in downtown Bedford during Christmas. He said Main Street hopes to announce some exciting news regarding the "No Interest Loan Program" within the next couple of weeks - the Town and County have partnered with Main Street on this program.

Councilman Vest said that part of the plan was to get more renters and people in the downtown area.

Mr. Johnson said Main Street is starting a Bedford Boot Camp - it is an eight week process with which anyone who would like to start a business in Bedford can take part in. He said that by the time the process is over, the winner of the process gets a grant in the amount of \$5,000 that helps with utilities and rent. Mr. Johnson explained the process will educate and inform a prospective business owner as to what it would take to start and maintain a business.

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Sara Smith, Executive Director of Bedford Main Street, stated that the Boot Camp will be led by the following individuals: John Stinnett, First Citizens Bank - speaking about credit and business plan overviews; Steve Wandrei - leading the legal classes; Tammy Brown, Union Bank Vice President - financial; Irene Wheeler, Associate Professor of Marketing at Central Virginia Community College; and Lynn Kirby - taking additional marketing concepts and exploring those. Ms. Smith said this process is based on a program utilized by Marion, Virginia, which has been very successful. She said that existing business owners will also be invited to participate to polish their skills and refine their business plan for the purpose of successful growth in the future.

Councilman Stanley said that one of Ms. Smith's focuses was going to be collecting data and asked if she had an update in terms of numbers.

Ms. Smith explained that she has been unable to determine the vacancy rate. Ms. Smith said one of the first projects she is working on, from a data collection perspective for the businesses in the Town, is to find out how many commercial spaces the Town has, and exactly how many are empty. Ms. Smith stated that she just finished a report for Virginia Main Street and of downtown and reviewed the areas to be included.

Councilman Stanley asked Ms. Smith to share the report on expansion with Council.

Councilman Carson asked if Ms. Smith was in communication with the owners of the vacant buildings in the downtown area.

Mr. Johnson explained that several vacant buildings are owned by parties that do not live in the area. He then explained the process of holding property owners' meetings.

Councilman Black said the Board has been informed of the "Tax Abatement Program" so the Board can educate the businesses about that.

Councilman Vest, Chairman of the Finance Committee, reported the committee met earlier in the day, reviewed the monthly statement, and had a closed session regarding litigation and property.

Mr. Warner reported the Code of the Town of Bedford requires Council to approve any passenger rates charged by licensed taxi operators in the Town. The rates have not been adjusted for several years, and the current operator has requested an adjustment to decrease the rates. The proposed rates have been reviewed, the ordinance has been revised, and the rates are comparable to those in the area. Mr. Warner said the staff recommends approval by Council of the proposed revision to the ordinance.

Councilman Black moved that the ordinance be adopted. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hailey.

Members of Council raised questions regarding the rate structure in the proposed ordinance, the need for such an ordinance, and discussion ensued.

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Mayor Wandrei said that in light of the comments raised by Council members, Council should remand this and direct Mr. Berry to review the ordinance and respond to the questions that have been raised, particularly in reference to the rate structure.

Councilman Beck made a substitute motion to remand. The motion was seconded by Councilman Black. After a brief discussion concerning procedure, the motion was then voted upon and carried by the following roll call vote:

Councilman Black	aye
Councilman Carson	aye
Councilman Hailey	aye
Vice Mayor Rush	absent
Councilman Stanley	aye
Councilman Vest	aye
Mayor Wandrei	aye

The Mayor said he was curious why someone would ask Council to reduce the taxi rates.

The Assistant Town Manager said the Town has administered an Enterprise Zone as authorized by the Commonwealth of Virginia since 2005. The current area of the zone is 243.54 acres, within an allowable area of 640 acres. At its previous meetings, the Community Development Committee has met and discussed its firm desire to maximize the use of the Enterprise Zone area by applying the designation to the full 640 acres or as close to that area as possible. Per that direction, staff drafted a resolution identifying parcels and showing those on a map. Mr. Warner explained that procedurally we have gotten a bit ahead of ourselves. In order to actually submit a request to amend the zone, Council has to conduct a public hearing, which has to be advertised twice and that has not taken place. Mr. Warner said that the staff was not asking for any formal action on the resolution and asked Council to approve advertising the public hearing.

Mr. Warner explained the map of the proposed Enterprise Zone changes.

Mayor Wandrei said it was the consensus of Council to proceed with holding the public hearing.

Mayor Wandrei adjourned the meeting at 7:32 p.m.